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# **Getting the balance right? Party competition on immigration and conflicting ideological ‘pulls’**

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## **Abstract**

Will a plurality of cleavages ‘pull’ parties in different *ideological* directions? Are these strains particularly troublesome when competing on issues that lack an obvious dimensional fit? Are some parties more likely than others to experience these tensions? And does it matter? While the essence of the party-political space has received substantial coverage, less attention is paid to the effects that multi-dimensionality may have on issue competition. Comparing British and Swedish parties, the article analyses how any contradictory positions have been negotiated, and when such tensions are likely to emerge.

## **Introduction**

West European polities are in a state of flux. Not only have the actors diversified but so have the issues of contention and modes of competition (Katz and Mair, 2002). Mainstream parties are thus subject to a novel set of challengers (Harmel and Gibson, 1995) but also have to deal with the imminent sense of ideological crisis as the conversation shifts from ‘visions’ to ‘competence’ (van der Brug, 2004).

The nature of party systems, and especially their dimensionality, has consequently received substantial attention. The literature has scrutinised whether contestation takes place along single, dual or multiple cleavages (Enyedi and Deegan-Krause, 2010), and whether ownership - rather than spatial - competition is becoming more prominent (Green, 2007). These changes are likely to impact on the strength of party/electorate linkages (Dalton, 2002); on party stances (Dinas and Gemenis, 2010), and on the relevance of ideology in the political ‘game’ (Enyedi, 2008). The immigration ‘issue’ is one of those new matters that is particularly challenging for scholars and parties alike. It not only has a disruptive effect on left-right classifications (Benoit and Laver 2007) but also follows a logic of its own as to when parties decide to make it a top election priority (Dahlström and Esaiasson, 2011) and/or to change their positions (Breunig and Luedtke, 2008).

Yet surprisingly, less is said about the potential effects that multi-dimensionality has on party competition, especially on thorny issues like immigration. The lack of scholarly attention is attributed to some of the assumptions made. One posits that parties may very well exist in multi-dimensional spaces but competition continues to be uni-dimensional (van der Brug and van Spanje, 2009). Another suggests that the liberal – restrictive axis (regarding immigration control) maps onto

the left – right continuum (Bale, 2003). But such conclusions do not fully address two important issues. If party systems are characterised by a single fault line, why is the centre-left, but not the centre-right, ‘caught between ideology and strategy’ when competing on immigration (Alonso and Claro da Fonseca, 2012: 866)? And why would the left *also* push a restrictive line (Hinnfors *et al*, 2012)?

This article suggests that not only are party systems characterised by multi-dimensionality and increased flux but so is the immigration ‘issue’. Mainstream parties therefore face a series of challenges stemming from immigration’s multifaceted nature, and how it resists being pinned down to a particular fault-line. In turn this lends itself to a variety of framing challenges (Lahav and Courtenmanche, 2012) such that parties may get it electorally ‘wrong’. Attempting to internalise ‘new’ issues into ‘old’ cleavages (Hooghe *et al*, 2002) proves difficult should there be intra-party disagreements on dimensional fit and societal impact, leading to a crystallising of any inherent ideological tensions (van Kersbergen and Krouwel, 2008).

Should one accept the existence of multiple dimensions, and if parties adopt multiple positions, will this generate a set of conflicting ideological ‘pulls’ when engaging with a cross-cutting issues like immigration? These strains should emerge when parties’ stances on state-market relations (*State Interventionist (SI)/Free Market (FM)*) conflict with their views on state-individual relations (*Green/Alternative/Libertarian (GAL)/Traditional/Authoritarian/ Nationalist (TAN)*). The framing challenges presented by immigration therefore captures tensions between the FM and TAN aspects of some centre-right parties, and the SI and GAL facets that are equally characteristic for some centre-left parties.

The article is laid out as follows. We first survey how the societal cleavages have changed, and whether these shifts impact on party competition, system

dimensionality, and on the relationship between ‘ideology’ and ‘immigration’. Our research questions, case selection rationale, methodology and operationalisation are then discussed and, finally, we present findings from a manifesto analysis which are related to a new set of qualitative data (interviews with British and Swedish MPs and party strategists).

While our data suggest ideology to still ‘matter’, it matters in different ways for different parties. Class-based parties, especially, tend to find the immigration ‘issue’ more difficult to deal with than those stemming from the liberal-conservative tradition. Yet post-material parties also appear to be in a better position to handle the conflicting ‘pulls’ since they often function *outside* of the established cleavages. But parties’ aggregate positions matter as well. When multi-dimensional positioning suggests corresponding views on the role of the state, the outcome is often fewer framing dilemmas and, consequently, less intra-party conflict over what type of issue the immigration ‘issue’ constitutes. And institutions matter as well. But somewhat counterintuitively, parties in FPTP-systems experience *more* difficulties than they do in PR-systems due to the greater need for holding together diverse *ideological* coalitions to secure the majority vote. And this is despite the fact that the former tends to be associated with valence competition, and a *less* important role of ideology.

### **The Changing Nature of the Societal Cleavages**

Classifying parties along some form of left-right continuum (Budge, 2000; Giljam and Oscarsson, 1996) is common practice in political science but the meaning of ‘left’ and ‘right’ is often so diverse that it is ‘multifaceted at best, elusive at worst’ (Arian and

Shamir, 1983:139). This elusiveness stems from prevailing discrepancies regarding the meaning, and nature, of the party-ideological space (Huber and Inglehart, 1995). The literature is thus characteristically divided between those suggesting a ‘new’, post-material divide to *supersede* the ‘old’, material cleavage (Inglehart, 1997); those suggesting the *meaning* of the ‘left-right’ divide(s) to be the key change (Kriesi *et al*, 2006), and those accepting the *existence* of multi-dimensional dimensions (Hooghe *et al*, 2002). However, what they share is a view that most polities were structured around *disagreements* in the post-war period with parties on ‘the left’ favouring e.g. higher levels of collective ownership; taxation and labour market regulation than parties on ‘the right’. Later on these differences concerned degrees of party acceptance for certain life-style and/or individual choices, or the nature of democracy (Inglehart, 1971) but are today increasingly connected to issues of national identity and sovereignty (Hooghe *et al.*, 2002). Their labels may indeed have changed but these fault lines also appear remarkably static in that the overarching issue still concerns the role of the state, albeit in different spheres. For reasons of parsimony, however, the article uses Hooghe *et al*’s terminology - *GAL/TAN* - when referring to the non-material dimension.

When the relationship between mainstream parties and the immigration ‘issue’ is addressed, the literature highlights a variety of variables. These include ideological orientation; the presence/success of anti-immigration parties; the number of asylum claims or the number of migrants, more generally, present in the host society (Rydgren, 2005; Freeman, 1997). Except for ideology, these factors are ‘external’ to parties themselves, thereby emphasising their reactions to particular exogenous ‘shocks’. Given immigration’s complexity, and the associated problems of dimensional fit, we seek to shed light on these internal aspects and how parties deal

with the potential problems that can arise. We argue that it is the aggregate dimensional positions that are the main sources of these ‘pulls’, especially so when it comes to an ideologically ambiguous area such as immigration.

A plurality of cleavages may constitute a challenge for parties when deciding on how - and *where* – to frame their position(s) (Money, 1999). Unless successfully circumvented, immigration’s inherent elusiveness presents a series of obstacles. For the centre-right, it juxtaposes market-liberal (FM) and socio-culturally conservative wings (TAN). The former, mainly present in Liberal Democratic and Conservative parties, often advocate for the private sector to have a greater say on the appropriate levels of skilled and, sometimes, unskilled labour migration. The latter wing, often present in Christian Democratic and Conservative parties, is more hesitant towards handing over such a key area of sovereignty to non-state actors. And both wings experience conflicting attitudes toward asylum seeker and refugee migration (Bale, 2003).

The centre-left faces a similar dilemma. Their traditional inclination to support state intervention and regulation of markets (SI) is contrasted with ideas of increased personal freedoms and globalised ethical concerns (GAL) which arguably point towards *less* state intervention. For Social Democratic and reformed Left parties, trying to limit (labour) migration is justified with reference to retaining good terms and conditions in the labour market (Hinnfors *et al*, 2012). Allowing for ‘uncontrolled’ entry potentially creates a new – *ethnic* - underclass and accordingly splits the indigenous working class. But centre-left parties – particularly the Greens and the reformed Left - also tend to favour generous approaches to asylum seekers (Shuster, 2000). These underlying tensions require parties to perform a delicate balancing act, and if unsuccessful they are likely to face sustained oppositional

criticism (for being too liberal or too restrictive); the potential vote ‘theft’ by the populist radical right and/or increased uncertainty regarding which electoral strategies to pursue. However, not all parties will experience the same strength of these ‘pulls’. Certain positional configurations can work together better since they provide corresponding views on the role of the state.

FM/GAL and SI/TAN-parties should be less likely to experience such strains whereas the FM/TAN and SI/GAL-dittos are more likely to be conflicted since their positions provide contradictory cues. To not lose out electorally, parties have to manage these tensions somehow and internally negotiate what type of ‘issue’ immigration constitutes, and along which cleavage it has a better fit. FM/GAL and SI/TAN-parties may still experience (some) tension but it should be less challenging due to the positional congruence regarding the role of the state.

Ideology is of course not the only factor determining whether parties are conflicted. Other types of institutions, e.g. electoral systems, may equally affect party behaviour (Dalton, 2002) and the degree of ‘pull’ they experience. ‘Visions’ may thus be less important in FPTP-systems than they are in PR ones (Green-Pedersen, 2007). But if this the case then our British data should also reflect this with fewer instances of *ideological* ‘pull’ compared to what we anticipate to find in the Swedish PR-system. The system-level differences should thus be more pronounced than the party-family, or ideologico-positional differences that may exist in both cases.

This leads us to the following hypotheses:

H1. Parties with an SI/GAL or FM/TAN combination are *more* likely to experience conflicting ideological ‘pulls’ on immigration;



H2. Parties with an FM/GAL or SI/TAN combination are conversely *less* likely to experience such strains;

H3. Parties in FPTP-systems are *less* likely to experience *any* ‘pulls’ (SI/GAL or FM/TAN) compared to parties in PR-systems.

While our main focus is analysing party management of an increasingly divisive issue, we also goes beyond the pure case study. Should we not find much evidence for the proposed hypotheses then this will allow for a more broadly applicable phenomenon to be identified (George and Bennett, 2005) regarding the role of ideology for party competition.

## **Data and Methods**

Exploring the hypotheses, we examine how the British and Swedish mainstream<sup>1</sup> has managed these potential strains. In the period covered (1991-2010), both cases experienced different types of migratory pressures (Hampshire, 2013); varying degrees of public acceptance for the pursued policies (Freeman, 1997), and different levels of populist radical right party success at the national level (Mudde, 2004). Yet there are also similarities. Parties with an immigration sceptic agenda made noted gains during local and EU level elections (Dahlström and Sundell, 2012; Hayton, 2010), and the - *mainstream party* - politics of immigration was marked by increasing levels of conflict regarding third country labour migration coupled with rising concerns over the magnitude of asylum claims (Bale *et al*, 2010; Hinnfors et al,

2012). And both countries experienced the aftermath of '[the] transformation//...//in the political culture of advanced industrial societies' (Inglehart 1971:991) suggesting that their respective parties compete in a space that is, at the very least, two-dimensional. Simultaneously, however, Britain continues to operate under a FPTP-system, at least at the Westminster level, while Sweden has a more 'classic' PR-system with an electoral threshold. This usually results in single-party governments with a parliamentary majority in the former whereas in the latter, coalitions and parliamentary minorities are the norm. The centripetal forces of the British system are thus said to trump any prevailing party differences and ideological strains which, conversely, should be more distinct and more relevant in the centrifugal Swedish case (Sartori, 1976). Yet these supply and demand, and institutional differences, do not provide much theoretical nor empirical foundation to explain why parties would experience an internal ideological conflict when considering their stances on immigration.

But we first need to establish positions in the two-dimensional space. This is done through a manifesto analysis for all mainstream parties represented in their respective national parliaments. Manifestos are here a key data source since they 'inform the electorate about the course of action the party will pursue when elected' (Klingemann, 1987:300) and are as such well suited for investigating degrees of conflict in comparative perspective (Green-Pedersen, 2007). One should of course be careful to equate 'manifesto' with 'party' position or, even, 'party direction' (Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006). But as the 'final word' prior to an election, manifestos are nevertheless what parties present to the electorate and often provide the framework for subsequent policy proposals (Walgrave and Nuytemanns, 2009). We follow De Lange's operationalization (2007; see also Pellikaan *et al*, 2007) and

Odmalm's (2012) subsequent scoring adjustments to capture parties' expressed stances on the SI/FM and GAL/TAN-dimensions.

Indicators 1-3 (Privatisation; Public Sector and Welfare and Social Security System) were scored as follows: (-1) if the statement predominantly indicates the party to favour more state intervention, and (+1) if it favours more market influence (De Lange, 2007). But since the 'more state/more market'-dichotomy did not always capture certain stances, the following changes were made: (-1) for more regulation, and (+1) for less (indicators 4 (Labour Market), and 7 (Trade and Enterprise); (-1) for raising, and (+1) for lowering taxes (indicator 5 (Taxation), and (-1) for more public spending, and (+1) for less (indicator 6 (Budget Deficit) (Odmalm, 2012).

The operationalization and scoring system for the GAL/TAN-dimension is also modified so as to circumvent the inherent ambiguity and overlap between certain categories. Indicators 2 – 4 are kept as is but the wording for the first ('Diversity of Lifestyles') is rephrased. It now goes beyond merely capturing the extent to which governments should 'interfere in the private domain' (De Lange, 2007: 420) to include attitudes on such diversity as well. De Lange also uses 'Immigration' and 'Integration of Cultural Minorities' to capture stances on 'Citizenship/Ethnocultural relations'. The difficulty here is that her definition - 'statements indicating support for an inclusive and universalistic society [or] support for an exclusive and particularistic society' (ibid.)) - mainly relates to 'Integration' and also borders on issues of national identity/nationalism. And none of the categories cover the, arguably, central 'new' politics concern of environmental protection vs. economic growth. The scale is therefore adjusted so it clearly captures statements relating to 'National Identity' (indicator 5); 'Integration' (indicator 6), and 'the Environment' (indicator 7) (Odmalm, 2012).

- (1) Diversity of Lifestyles: Positive (-1), or Negative (+1);
- (2) Favours Individual Freedom (-1), or a Moral Government (+1);
- (3) Favours Direct (-1), or Appointed (+1) Representation;
- (4) Favours More Individual Participation in Decision-Making (-1), or More Hierarchical Decision-Making Procedures (+1);
- (5) National Identity: Less Important (or inclusive) (-1), or More Important (or Exclusive) (+1);
- (6) Integration: Inclusive and Universalistic (-1), or Exclusive and Particularistic (+1) and
- (7) Environmental Protection (-1), or Economic Growth (+1) being more important.

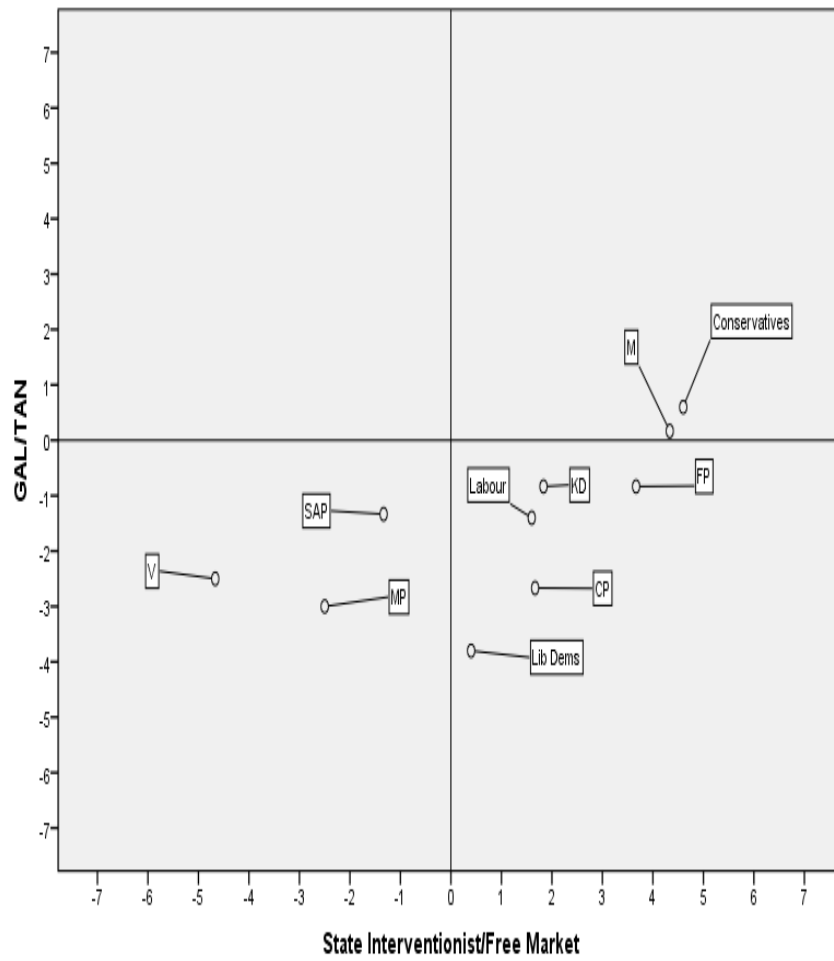
This approach differs from that of the two standard data sets - the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP), and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) – when identifying degrees of *confrontation* along two distinct dimensions. While the CMP primarily captures issue saliency, it also merges the ‘economic’ and ‘non-economic’ categories into one, unified left-right dimension exaggerating positions as well as the positional moves (Benoit and Laver, 2007). The CHES data, conversely, seek to remedy this ‘fault’ by asking country experts to classify parties along four substantive dimensions – economic; social; loci of decision-making and environmental policy – and also adds a ‘direct measure of party positions on a general left-right scale’ (ibid, p.91). While avoiding the mathematical constraints of the CMP, the CHES findings are also highly dependent on context since ‘the substantive meaning of left-right is not constant’ (ibid, p. 103). The analysis conducted here develops a measurement tool

that is able to ‘travel’ while also being sensitive to the content, rather than magnitude, of statements. Both data sets are however used as comparative benchmarks to check the overall validity of our calculations.

For coding consistency, continuous inter-reliability checks were carried out. Statements were initially scored by one author and then passed on to the other to score ‘blind’. Some discrepancies were identified through this process, e.g. one author would score (+1) whereas the other would give it a (0). These instances emerged when the concerned quasi-sentences were particularly lengthy, thus prompting a discussion, and occasional re-coding, of the score given.

Quantifying statements accordingly, and then adding them together, provides a positional range from -7 to +7 where the closer to -7 a party is, the more SI/GAL its stance will be. On the other hand, the closer to +7 a party is, the more FM/TAN its position is. We then averaged these positions across the five (UK), and six (SWE) elections to get a ‘final’ score which are plotted in a two-dimensional scatter diagram (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Average Party Position (1991 - 2010)



And, finally, parties are grouped together depending on positional configuration (Table. 1).

**Table 1. Type of ‘pull’ (grouped by country)**

<b>SI/GAL</b>	<b>FM/TAN</b>		<b>SI/TAN</b>	<b>FM/GAL</b>
<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>		<b>N/A</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>
V (-4.7; -2.5)	Moderates (4.3; 0.2)			KD (1.8; -0.8)
MP (-2.5; -3)				FP (3.7; -0.8)
SAP (-1.3; -1.3)	<b>BRITAIN</b>			CP (1.7; -2.7)
	Conservatives (4.6; 0.6)			
				<b>BRITAIN</b>
				Labour (1.6; -1.4)
				Lib Dems (0.4; -3.8)

To assess the management of any conflicting ‘pulls’ the article invokes semi-structured interviews with British and Swedish MPs or party strategists (29 in total). These centred on a set of pre-arranged themes (*ideology; policy position(s)* and *party competition*) but also allowed follow-up questions to be asked should answers be vague or off-topic (Devine, 2002).

We drew a purposive sample to ensure maximum variation among those with substantive expertise in the areas we were interested in (Patton, 1980), and MPs assumed to have particular knowledge of the three themes were initially identified. The selection criteria included past, and current, memberships of committee/s (e.g. Labour Market, or Home Affairs); position/s held (e.g. political secretary, or committee chair), and time as an MP. Due to issues of access, we also employed a ‘snow-balling’ technique (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981) which led us to interview some former MPs and party strategists. The interviews employed open-ended

questions asked in a balanced fashion, e.g., ‘some parties favour more state intervention in the market, while others want more market freedom. How would you describe [party] in these terms?’ The interviews were then transcribed following a ‘denaturalist’ approach removing any ‘idiosyncratic elements of speech’ (Oliver *et al*, 2005: 173-74), and the selected quotes were subsequently checked for relevance before incorporated into the article. As an ethical precaution, all interviewees were informed that the data would be anonymised for future publications. They were also given the option to view the transcript. In a minority of cases changes were suggested to be made, primarily relating to incorrect spelling of names or places. Some of the validity concerns associated with qualitative data were able to be ‘controlled’ for, while others proved more difficult. The material was returned to ‘over and over again to see if the constructs, categories, explanations, and interpretations ma[d]e sense’ (Patton, 1980: 339), paying special attention to the latter when the quotes were incorporated. But they were also revisited to try and identify any emerging patterns once the transcripts were compared (e.g. was party ideology portrayed in a similar fashion? Were the effects of immigration understood differently depending on age/role in party?). But whether ‘the account [accurately] represent[ed] participants’ realities of the social phenomena’ (Creswell and Miller, 2000: 124) were more challenging as we had to accept that the information we received was a truthful account of these ‘realities’. The article thus invokes a ‘mixed methodology’, and a ‘mixed modelling’ approach to the data (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

## **Findings**



Table 2. summarises the results. 60% of the parties predicted to experience these ‘pulls’ also reported doing so (H.1). By comparison 80% of the parties *not* expected to experience any strains behaved accordingly (H.2). The support for H.3 is weaker with 30% conforming to the predictions made. Each case is discussed in more detail below.

**Table 2. Ideology predictions (confirmed cases in bold)**

<b>H1. Parties <i>more</i> likely to experience conflicting ‘pulls’ (party/party family)</b>	<b>H2. Parties <i>less</i> likely to experience conflicting ‘pulls’ (party/party family)</b>
<u><b>SI/GAL</b></u>  <b>V (Socialist/Social Democratic)</b> MP (Green) <b>SAP (Socialist/Social Democratic)</b>  <u><b>FM/TAN</b></u>  Moderates (Conservative) <b>Conservatives (Conservative)</b>	<u><b>FM/GAL</b></u>  <b>KD (Religious/Christian Democratic)</b> <b>FP (Liberal/Social liberal)</b> <b>CP (Liberal/Social liberal)</b> Labour Party (Socialist/Social Democratic) <b>Lib Dems (Liberal/Social liberal)</b>
<b>H3. System-level predictions</b>	
<u><b>FPTP (<i>less</i> ‘pulls’)</b></u>  Conservatives (Conservative) Labour Party (Socialist/Social Democratic) <b>Lib Dems (Liberal/Social liberal)</b>  <u><b>PR (<i>more</i> ‘pulls’)</b></u>  <b>V (Socialist/Social Democratic)</b> Greens (Greens) <b>SAP (Socialist/Social Democratic)</b> Moderates (Conservative) KD (Religious/Christian Democratic) FP (Liberal/Social liberal) CP (Liberal/Social liberal)	

## SI/GAL parties

The SI-profiles (Vänsterpartiet (V): -4.7; Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti (SAP): -1.3) are confirmed through the interviews. Although both parties are not opposed to the ‘market forces’ as such, their key concerns relate to the extent of privatisation with V adopting a more interventionist stance (e.g. ‘[T]he state should [not] own *everything* [but it] should be a key player and have extensive influence.’ (V 2)). Miljöpartiet (MP) scores comparatively higher (-2.5) but portray a less clear ideological position and a rather pragmatic approach to the political ‘game’ (e.g. ‘[W]e believe very strongly in individual freedom but also that collective solutions are sometimes necessary.’ (MP 1); ‘[W]e don’t fit on the conventional scales. We went with the Red bloc because we weren’t able to reach an agreement with the Blues’ (MP 2)). While confirming their GAL-profiles (V: -2.5; MP: -3; SAP: -1.3), a tension was also identified between ‘the individual’ and ‘the collective’. V and SAP more obviously struggled to justify state intervention in this sphere (‘[W]e also favour a personalised maternity and paternity insurance which is very much about state interference.’ (V 1); ‘[This dimension] is more problematic since it requires us to decide on things that are not obviously ‘social democratic’’. (SAP 4)). When the two ideological streams are transposed to the key categories of newcomers (asylum seekers and labour migrants), the dilemma of ‘labour market protectionism’ vs. ‘no borders’/‘international solidarity’ was clearly identified, exemplified by the following quote:

‘Persson’s position was indicative of the problems [we] have had when trying to juggle the need for low-paid migrant labour and the interests of the native workforce//...//Refugees were not considered to push down salaries in the same way//...//they are kept outside of the labour market for so long.’ (SAP 1).

MP appears less constrained by these ideological parameters (‘[S]ometimes we are the new social liberal party, sometimes the strong Green party and sometimes the party for solidarity.’ (MP 2)) which further facilitated an alignment with the Alliance for the labour migration reforms in 2008 (‘We have an ‘open borders’-approach//...//[so] we could co-operate with them’. (MP 2)). The interview data would thus partially support Hs 1. and 3.

### **FM/TAN-parties**

The Conservatives show strong FM- (4.6) but moderate, to centrist, TAN-profiles (0.6). We thus expect it to be ‘pulled’ by these opposing positions (H1.) but as it also functions in a FPTP-system (H3.) any prevailing tensions may very well be trumped by an emphasis on ‘issue ownership’ (Green and Hobolt, 2008). The FM-score was readily acknowledged (e.g. ‘[W]e are a centre-right party//...//favouring lower taxes, less state intervention, etc.’ (Cons. 2)). However, some interviewees also pointed to significant difficulties in assessing where ‘the party’ stands alluding to ideological inconsistencies between party leaders; between different ministerial posts, and between the party and its membership base (e.g. ‘IDS was clearly Thatcherite-right;

Howard was Authoritarian-Thatcherite-right, except in some areas where he was, funnily enough, a bit of a social-liberal.//...//Defence policy is currently a lot more to the right than trade is.’ (Cons. 3); ‘The membership base is a lot more to the ‘right’.’ (Cons. 6)). Conversely, the calculated TAN-position corresponds better to the interviewees’ understanding of how the party has evolved, especially following Cameron’s modernisation push (Bale, 2010; Ellison, 2011). But although certain features, particularly regarding alternative lifestyles and defence were moderated (e.g. ‘[T]he new MPs are//...//more relaxed in their views on e.g. civil partnerships.’ (Cons 2.); ‘[T]he party has ring-fenced the NHS but not defence’ (Cons 1)), others, e.g. loci of decision-making, had been reinforced (e.g. ‘[Cameron] talks about openness, transparency, democracy//...//but the way he runs the Conservatives has been the complete opposite.’ (Cons. 2)), and had resulted in additional uncertainties over party direction and identity -

‘Where do you [Cameron] stand here?//...//You can’t have a Left *and* a Right-wing approach.’ (Cons. 3); ‘[T]he most extreme free marketeers tend to be the most authoritarian on social issues.’ (Cons. 4).

These strains are further reflected in the party’s relationship with labour migration. Although recognised as economically beneficial, it is also portrayed as overwhelming, especially after the EU’s enlargement in 2004 (e.g. ‘[W]e got that unprecedented influx of people that the country wasn’t really prepared for.’ (Cons. 2); ‘You have to find somewhere for them to live, to go to school, to be treated, and that creates pressure.’ (Cons. 5.)), and as a disincentive for dealing with issues of domestic unemployment –

‘If you have 3 million unemployed then they can fill those positions.’ (Cons 3.); ‘[Y]ou don’t need to import cheap labour to get the job done.’ (Cons. 5.).

It also seems to reinforce certain TAN-traits, especially of the nationalist type (e.g. ‘[I]t’s our history and our heritage//...//Immigration evokes those types of quite fundamental questions’ (Cons. 5)), and push the party towards a more welfare-state chauvinistic position (e.g. ‘[W]hether or not you have a perception that public services are being allocated in an unfair way.’ (Cons 4)). These conflicting views also characterise the relationship with the asylum category. Although the welcoming of people fleeing persecution is considered a ‘British tradition’, these categories are equally linked with concerns over fairness (e.g. ‘[W]hat you have to pay out now, and what you get back later, that equation does not work out in the taxpayers’ favour.’ (Cons. 5.)), and with the erosion of national sovereignty (e.g. ‘[O]ur ability to control immigration has gone down to zero.’ (Cons. 7)). And while ‘numbers’ are identified as a key policy concern it is not obvious what type of issue(s) they constituted, or what strategy the party should pursue, as one MP puts it –

‘[We] need to control numbers and be seen to be able to do this [but] do you want to send out an image that you are going to be hostile or nasty towards migrants?’ (Cons. 6).

These framing difficulties meant that the party got it electorally ‘wrong’ on several occasions (e.g. ‘Every time that tactic has been made explicit, it has not worked’ (Cons 6)).

The Moderates underwent a major transformation in time for the 2006 election and adjusted their views on, e.g., taxation and ‘the Swedish model’ (Widfeldt, 2007) yet their average score nevertheless places them firmly on the FM-side (4.3). Questions of state/market-relations appear comparatively easier for the party to deal with (e.g. ‘[W]e believe in market solutions to economic problems.’ (Moderates 3)), but the weak TAN-position (0.2) hints at non-economic issues being more challenging (e.g. ‘Those questions constitute, perhaps not an identity crisis, but definitely a challenge.’ (Moderates 3)). The ‘liberal-conservative’-tag suggests a clear ideological steer on ‘state-individual’-relations (e.g. ‘[T]he individual should//...//decide more and the state less’ (Moderates 1)) but it also indicates a more complicated relationship regarding the *limits* of certain freedoms, and the challenges involved when negotiating e.g. alternative lifestyles vs. traditional values (e.g. ‘[They] were against it because they thought marriage should follow the traditional religious traditions.’ (Moderates 1)), or national security vs. personal integrity (e.g. ‘[W]e are more in favour of CCTV and monitoring [today].’ (Moderates 2)). The expressed views on labour migration –

‘[i]f a company says, ‘We need these Indian technicians’ then they are probably right.’ (Moderates 1)

- thus fit with the party’s FM-position but asylum seems to reinforce certain TAN characteristics, particularly regarding ‘authoritarianism’ (e.g. ‘[W]e proposed a contract//...//accepting fundamental democratic values, human and women’s rights, etc.’ (Moderates 2)) yet was simultaneously counter-pulled by a strong GAL understanding of mobility –

‘[P]eople should be able to move and settle wherever they want’ (Moderates 2).

Again the data partially support Hs.1 and H.3. While the Conservatives are subject to considerable *inter*-ideological strain, the Moderates are not necessarily ‘pulled’ by different dimensions but rather experience an *intra*-dimensional tension stemming from the TAN-position bordering the GAL-sphere.

### **FM/GAL-parties**

Kristdemokraterna’s (KD) FM- (1.8) and GAL-scores (-0.8) suggest a degree of tension given the latter’s proximity to the adjacent dimension (e.g. ‘[Regarding] the family//...//we advocate very little state interference [but] many of our welfare policies are very much geared towards extensive state intervention.’ (KD 1)). While it was initially difficult for KD to relate to, and place itself on, the left-right – scale, an expanding issue agenda had clarified their party identity (‘[W]e have matured//...//not least regarding the economic [questions]. It doesn’t mean that we moved further to the right but rather clarified our position.’ (KD 2))

The interviewees thus acknowledge KD’s *economic* centre-right position but express a more nebulous understanding of its GAL/TAN-placement (‘[W]e share certain views with V, on refugees e.g.//...//[W]e obviously differ regarding what the value base should be, Christian for us and human rights for them (KD 1)). Yet these potential strains does not appear to affect KD’s relationship with neither labour nor asylum migration (H.2 and H.3) –

‘[m]ore flexible//...//policies is a great way to deal with global poverty//...//  
We believe in open borders and we don’t like the idea of Fortress Europe’  
(KD 1)).

Folkpartiet (FP) has had to balance market- and social-liberal tendencies, where the emphasis on either strand has shifted over time (e.g. ‘[W]e switched a lot, going to the left, to the right, back again, etc’ (FP 2)). While the FM-traits (3.7) are acknowledged, the interviewees also recognised how the party was ‘pulled’ in an SI *and* TAN direction (e.g. ‘The party is not particularly liberal on certain issues, e.g. on alcohol, and rather interventionist in some welfare sectors.’ (FP 3)). These complicated relationships with ‘liberalism’ have somewhat surprisingly not caused much intra-party fragmentation but served to reignite dormant ideological discussions about party direction and identity (e.g. ‘[T]here is always a lot discussion between the social-liberal Liberals and the classic liberal Liberals, e.g. what is liberalism? What should it be?’ (FP 2)). However, given the equally low GAL-score (-0.8), the classic-; market-; and social-liberal wings are occasionally juxtaposed, especially regarding certain ‘freedom’-issues (‘[I]t definitely creates tension//...//between the more authoritarian and the more libertarian groups.’ (FP 3)). An identified challenge was how the term ‘liberal’ was subject to concept-stretching and adopted by different MPs regardless of ideological affiliation (e.g. ‘[In the debates] everyone uses ‘liberalism’ as a form of alibi’//...//(FP 2)). This suggests greater levels of uncertainty and ideological strain regarding the different migratory types. But labour migration is portrayed according to the party’s FM-score (e.g. ‘You want to come here and work? Sure.’ (FP 2); ‘//...//it should be up to the employer to decide.’ (FP 3)). Although asylum remained a non-issue, family reunification was an increasing source of



conflict, especially since entering a governing position in 2006 (e.g. '[S]ome wanted stricter rules and more demands//...//others were saying it should be liberalised.' (FP 2)). (H.2 and H.3).

The reformed agrarian party, Centerpartiet (CP), also embarked on an ideological re-orientation but unlike the Moderates, they moved further in the FM-direction. The emphasis thus shifted to 'the individual' and 'the free market' but balanced with a focus on 'green issues' (e.g. '[W]e are more obviously a liberal and bourgeois party today but with a strong attachment to 'green' questions' (CP 3)). The average scores thus correspond to where the interviewees consider the party to be located. However, the estimated FM- (1.7) and GAL-positions (-2.7) likely underplay CP's significant ideological shift (e.g. 'The key change is how we've quite clearly moved towards the economic right.' (CP 4)

. The solid FM and GAL positions are, as expected, echoed in CP's views on migration (H.2 and H.3). Labour migration is portrayed as unproblematic and an issue best suited for the employers, rather than the state, to decide upon (e.g. '[T]he employer//...//should have more say regarding who comes in.' (CP 1); '[I]f you get offered a job, why shouldn't you be allowed to move here?' (CP 2)).

We also expected less strain regarding asylum. Although the MPs emphasised how CP is committed to the treaties signed up for, they also suggested an intra-party shift being underway where immigration – *in general* – should be facilitated rather than constrained. It was thus acknowledged how 'the party ha[d] become a lot more positive toward migration' but was also linked back to certain core *party* values such that 'it [becomes] clear that we should also be in favour of//...//free mobility.' (CP 1).

The Labour Party underwent a similar ideological transformation culminating in the landslide victory of New Labour in 1997 (Heath *et al*, 2001). The party thus

acknowledged, if not embraced, the beneficial role of the market forces ('[Y]ou got private companies involved in...//public services. Very few would envision [us] pushing for this previously.' (Lab 4)), and have gradually moved towards an FM-position coupled with a strong emphasis on social justice (Glyn and Wood, 2001). Again, less ideological tension is expected due to the congruence between its FM- (1.6) and GAL-positions (-1.4), and how Labour functions in an FPTP-system (H.2 and H.3).

These shifts were recognised by the interviewees. The key changes concerned Labour's views on state ownership; labour market structure and taxation (e.g. '[D]ropping Clause 4 is really the key change here.' (Lab 3); '[There is] less protection if you are made unemployed//...//[b]ut the rest of Europe has a consistently higher rate of unemployment' (Lab 1); 'By not increasing income tax as much//...//we also lost the image of being the party of high taxes.' (Lab 2), and has moved it toward the same sphere as the Conservatives. The GAL-position, conversely, has remained relatively stable (e.g. 'We have always been the small 'L' liberal party on these questions.' (Lab 2)), putting it closer to the Lib Dems. These changes should thus have filtered through to how the party engages with the different migratory types. However, the interviews suggest similar tensions to those experienced by the Conservatives (H.3). Labour migration is not only acknowledged to benefit the overall economy but also raises questions about labour market protectionism -

'[T]he unions were very concerned about how further immigration would affect wage levels and workers' rights.' (Lab 3).

The scores may therefore not accurately reflect some of the SI and TAN-remains from Labour's previous incarnation. Asylum migration equally subjected the party to further internal divisions. Partly between ideological commitments, and partly between negotiating how social justice should be applied, and to whom (e.g. 'To be fair to those that genuinely need protection, you have to protect the system.' (Lab 1)).

For the Lib Dems the degree of tension could in fact be *stronger* given their weak FM- (0.4) but strong GAL-profiles (-3.8) yet any strains should be largely redundant given the institutional setting they are in (H.3). Confirming the former position (e.g. 'I don't want the shops to be run by the state but I don't want private companies to run the railways.' (Lib Dems 1)), the party is also described as 'centre-left' (e.g. 'Centre-left and liberal, those are the key things really.' (Lib Dems 2)) suggesting potential tensions between key instincts of being market-, as well as welfare state-, friendly (e.g. '[T]he difference is that we think that there should also be a strong safety net.' (Lib Dems 4)). While their low FM-score signals a strain between the FM- and SI-wings, the GAL-position appears more solid (e.g. '[V]oters link us with civil liberties, identity cards and the environment.' (Lib Dems 2)) (Russell and Fieldhouse, 2005). The ambivalent position regarding state-market relations anticipates an equally hesitant approach to labour migration but our data suggest the opposite. Although one interviewee highlights some SI-objections –

'[Y]ou need to make a fair assessment of how many people and what type of skills you need' (Lib Dems 3)

- their FM-orientation is discussed more frequently (e.g. 'You widen the market and the economic base, [so] it's still a free market view on migration that we have.' (Lib

Dems 4)). The clear GAL-position is also reflected in the party's stance on asylum/refugees where solidarity has been a prime concern ('[I]t is civilised people's duty to look after people, from whatever country, who are fleeing genuine persecution and terror' (Lib Dems 3)) (Hs.2 and 3).

Opposing ideological stances thus make positioning on immigration a challenge but the SI/GAL-configuration appears more difficult to negotiate than the FM/TAN-combination. While this was expected, we did not fully anticipate the former category to be so much more problematic than the latter (H.1). Parties based around class - and class conflict - may thus find it harder to reconcile immigration's (negative) economic impact with its (positive) socio-cultural effects compared to the (positive) economic but (negative) socio-cultural effects we assumed to cause indecisiveness for the FM/TAN-parties.

The FM/GAL-category was conversely *not* expected to experience much tension. This was confirmed by all parties, except for Labour where the interviews suggest some SI 'remains' still being present which continue to influence the relationship with immigration. But we also found that ideological tension is not necessarily detrimental but can stimulate further discussion regarding party identity and direction. And, finally, are parties in FPTP-systems less affected by these 'pulls' than they are in PR-systems? On the contrary, what the interviews suggest is that parties - in both cases - are subject to such strains, especially if they have conflicting views on the role of the state (Conservatives; V and SAP), and should any attempts to get balance 'right' not yet have filtered through (Labour).

## Conclusion

Our main objective was to establish whether opposing ideological positions – in multi-dimensional spaces – generate any conflicting ‘pulls’ when parties engage with the immigration ‘issue’. Through a manifesto analysis, and being sensitive to the institutional context, we predicted which parties that would be more *and* less likely to experience such strains. Three hypotheses were then explored using qualitative data from a series of semi-structured interviews. A secondary aim was to assess the alleged decline of ‘visions’ in political life. If the anticipated strains were *not* recognised, or perceived as particularly problematic, then this would allow us to make more general conclusions regarding the role of ideology. The findings suggest three developments. First, ideology (still) matters, but its relevance does not apply equally or in the same way. The identified ‘pulls’ appear stronger within class-based parties than within liberal-conservative ones - regardless of context. This suggests how the centre-right can have more to gain from emphasising the immigration ‘issue’ (Bale, 2003) but equally how some centre-left parties may have more to lose should the conversation steer towards welfare state/labour market protectionism, an area increasingly emphasised by the populist radical right.

MP constitutes an anomaly for our study however. The manifesto analysis suggests clear ideological tension but the interviews establish these to be largely absent. As a ‘new’ left party, it operates according to a different set of ideological parameters making them difficult to characterise and classify. While ideology still

‘matters’ for the ‘Socialist’ parties, it appears less relevant, and subsequently less divisive, for this ‘post-material’ party.

Second, positions (still) matter. Should parties have conflicting views on the role of the state, it usually translates into conflicting views on the effect(s) of immigration as well. They therefore find it difficult to decide on what type of ‘issue’ it constitutes. However, the weak TAN-ratings for the Conservatives and the Moderates, raise interesting questions for how variability within each ideological pairing matters for the strength of these ‘pulls’. Although spatially close to each other, the FM/TAN-combination appears more problematic for the former than it does for the latter. Degrees of dimensional saliency may of course be important here, and the ‘old’ cleavage is usually in the foreground in Swedish politics (Sundberg, 1999) whereas in Britain, it is one of several divides that compete for attention (Hopkins, 2009). But should the Conservatives be indicative of such additional tensions, then placement on the this dimension alone may represent an extra source of strain as any ‘modernisation’ programmes engage members of different views and with different issue priorities.

For those parties that got the balance ‘right’ such cross-cutting questions may be less troublesome and thus less likely to cause intra-party divisions, or further fragmentation. While the article supports the premise of competition being increasingly characterised by a series of choices of whether (or not) to emphasise certain positions/issues, it also identifies a potential determinant for this emphasis *beyond* that posited by ‘issue ownership’ theory. If parties face increased ideological tension, and should they also get the balance ‘wrong’, it may not necessarily matter if they own the cross-cutting issue (or not) since the unresolved *ideological* matters can lead to further confusion regarding party identity and direction.

Third, institutions, and electoral systems in particular, (still) matter and play an important role in this negotiating process. The British data highlight how FPTP-systems more readily encourage broad programmatic appeals where portraying competence often supersedes the experienced ‘pulls’. Yet this ‘catch-all’ approach also increases the necessity to put together ideologically diverse coalitions in order to win a majority, or at least a plurality, of votes. This further emphasises the importance of getting the balance, at least partially, ‘right’ so as to reconcile any ideological differences. The evidence presented here points to this being a fruitful area of further inquiry but since only one of each system was incorporated, any firm conclusions are premature.

Ideology would thus appear to be alive (Fukuyama, 1992) but instead of providing clarity and direction it often generates very conflicting views, particularly on cross-cutting issues, and especially so when the party-political spaces are characterised by multiple cleavages. Establishing how affected parties are by these ‘pulls’ helps to explain the more general trend toward selective emphasis - a strategy increasingly associated with ‘issue ownership’ competition -; why mainstream parties tend to downplay immigration’s electoral significance, or how they choose to outright not deal with it.

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## **Interviews**

V 1, 28/08/09

V 2, 21/08/09

MP 1, 20/08/09

MP 2, 28/08/09

SAP 1, 27/08/09

SAP 4, 02/09/09

Moderates 1, 25/08/09

Moderates 2, 26/08/09

Moderates 3, 18/08/09

Conservatives 2, 10/06/10

Conservatives 3, 2/07/10

Conservatives 4, 25/02/10

Conservatives 5, 15/09/10

Conservatives 6, 11/05/10

KD 1, 18/08/09

KD 2, 21/08/09

FP 2, 25/08/09

FP 3, 19/08/09

CP 1, 26/08/09

CP 2, 20/08/09

CP 3, 19/08/09

Labour 1, 9/12/09

Labour 2, 13/11/09

Labour 3, 29/03/11

Labour 4, 18/11/09

Lib Dems 1, 21/07/10

Lib Dems 2, 13/12/10

Lib Dems 3, 17/06/10

Lib Dems 4, 4/11/10

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<sup>1</sup> We define ‘mainstream party’ as one that is likely to be a ‘dominant force[s] in the formation of government’ (Ackland and Gibson, 2013:235), or act as a ‘junior’ partner in this process (either in a formal coalition or as an informal supporter in parliament) and would therefore be able to influence policy and/or the agenda. This thus excludes several, predominantly regionalist, parties e.g. the SNP and the Plaid Cymru; parties classified as radical/extremist/far-right (e.g. UKIP; the BNP and the

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Sweden Democrats) (Betz, 1994), and several smaller parties (primarily in Britain) such as the Democratic Unionist Party and the Greens.